

RONALD L. RAMSEY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
ONE LEGISLATIVE PLAZA
NASHVILLE, TN 37243
(615) 741-4524

STATE OF TENNESSEE



3311 HIGHWAY 126
BLOUNTVILLE, TN 37617
(423) 323-8700

OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 11, 2013
TO: Concerned Organizations and Citizens
FROM: Lt. Governor Ron Ramsey
RE: Judicial Redistricting

As you may be aware, the boundaries of Tennessee's current judicial districts were established almost thirty years ago. Over the past three decades, many counties have experienced extraordinary growth: several evolving from rural to suburban (or even urban-like) communities. At the upcoming August 2014 general election, the voters within each judicial district will elect (for eight-year terms) their district attorney general, public defender and state trial court judges. The current legislative session provides the best and most realistic (and probably the last) window-of-opportunity, prior to the August 2022 general election, to improve and promote judicial efficiency, effectiveness and access through judicial redistricting. Therefore, I am requesting the Senate Judiciary Committee to actively consider judicial redistricting.

Attached to this memorandum is a map of Tennessee's current judicial districts. The *Current Judicial Districts with Population Changes 1980 to 2010 Map* is intended as a graphic illustration of population imbalances that have evolved over the past thirty years, as well as certain illogical features drawn (some might say "gerrymandered") into the plan at its inception.

Also attached is the *2010 County Population Map*. This map is included for use by any concerned organization or citizen desiring to propose and submit a judicial redistricting plan for review by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

The guidelines for submission of a judicial redistricting plan are as follows:

- Each such plan must:
 - Use the 2010 federal census population data set forth in the *2010 County Population Map*;

- Be composed of districts that include only whole counties (i.e., no county may be divided among two or more districts);
- Redistrict the entire state (i.e., each of the state's ninety-five counties must be assigned to a district);
- Contain a total of thirty-one or fewer districts;
- Establish a separate single-county-district for each county having a population of 100,000 or more (i.e., Shelby, Davidson, Knox, Hamilton, Rutherford, Williamson, Montgomery, Sumner, Sullivan, Blount, Washington, and Wilson);
- Propose multi-county districts composed of contiguous counties; and
- Be submitted on the attached *Judicial Redistricting Proposal Form*.
- Each plan should strive to minimize administrative difficulties that may arise from:
 - Time zone boundaries; and
 - Geographical features that impede inter-county travel.
- Each plan should also strive to:
 - Minimize or eliminate single-county-districts having a population of less than 100,000; and
 - Minimize the overall range of population deviation between the most populous multi-county district and the least populous multi-county district.
- Plans must be submitted no later than March 1, 2013, to the General Assembly's Office of Legal Services, Suite G-10, War Memorial Building, Nashville, TN 37243.

I invite and encourage all concerned organizations and citizens across the state to develop and propose logical judicial redistricting plans to improve and promote efficiency, effectiveness and access. I am especially hopeful that the Trial Judges Association, the District Attorneys General Conference, the Public Defenders Conference, the Tennessee Bar Association and the Administrative Office of the Courts will individually or jointly submit a plan or plans.

If there are questions or if additional information is desired, please contact the Office of Legal Services at (615) 741-3056.